

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A strip merchandiser for use with an automated loading mechanism of the type described comprising an elongate body portion having a plurality of longitudinally spaced product mounting hooks capable of being raised and lowered as the strip passes through the mechanism and a header portion on the body portion, ~~said~~ the header portion having different characteristics to those of the body portion so that it cannot readily pass through the mechanism characterized in that the strip merchandiser at or adjacent the intersection between the header portion and the body portion is provided with means to allow the header portion to pass above the mechanism.
2. (Original) A strip merchandiser as in claim 1 wherein the means to allow the header portion to pass above the mechanism is provided by a section of reduced width at or adjacent the intersection between the header portion and the body portion whereby a neck portion is created by simply providing a pair of opposed lateral cuts.
3. (Currently Amended) A strip merchandiser as in Claim 2 wherein ~~said~~ the cuts are provided by completely removing the material from either side of the neck portion.

4. (Original) A strip merchandiser as in Claim 2 wherein each cut is in the form of an incomplete 'c' wherein one leg of the 'c' does not continue through to the edge of the strip.

5. (Currently Amended) A strip merchandiser as in ~~any preceding~~ Claim 1 wherein the neck portion, or that section of the strip intermediate the cuts, is ~~be~~ provided with means to encourage bending of the neck.

6. (Original) A strip merchandiser as in Claim 5 wherein such means includes the provision of transverse score line or crease or a series of perforations in the material which also encourage bending.

7. (Original) A machine for loading product on strip merchandisers having a plurality of longitudinally spaced hook portions and the like comprising a cogwheel rotatable by any convenient means and mounted between a pair of planar guide members whereby a strip merchandiser can be drawn under the guide members by rotation of the cogwheel through engagement with the hook portions, which engagement also acts to open each successive hook for loading characterized in that there is provided means to mechanically lift a header portion (if present) of the strip merchandiser.

8. (Original) A machine as in Claim 7 wherein the cogwheel is rotated manually.

9. (Original) A machine as in Claim 7 wherein the cogwheel is rotated by an electric motor controlled by a pedal or other suitable means.

10. (Currently Amended) A machine as in ~~any one of Claims 7 to 9~~ Claim 7 wherein the means to mechanically lift the header portion is provided by any convenient means such as a ramp or pair of ramps leading up to a point above the level of the plane of the guide members.

11-12. (Cancelled)